THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN POLICE: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW[1]

By

Craig D. Uchida

President
Justice and Security Strategies, Inc.
December 2004

[1] Forthcoming, in Roger G. Dunham and Geoffrey P. Alpert (eds.) *Critical Issues in Policing: Contemporary Readings*, Waveland Press, Inc.

Introduction

During the past 30 years, scholars have become fascinated with the history of police. A plethora of studies have emerged as a result. Early writings were concerned primarily with descriptions of particular police agencies. Roger Lane (1967) and James F. Richardson (1970) broke new ground in describing the origins of policing in Boston and New York, respectively. Since that time, others have followed suit with narratives of police organizations in St. Louis (Maniha, 1970; Richard, 1975), Denver (Rider, 1971), Washington D.C. (Alfers, 1975), Richmond (Cei, 1975), and Detroit (Schneider, 1980).

Other authors have focused on issues in policing. Wilbur R. Miller (1977) examined the legitimation of the police in London and New York. Samuel Walker (1977) and Robert Fogelson (1977) concentrated on professionalism and reform of errant police in the 19th and 20th centuries. Eric Monkkonen (1981) took an entirely different approach by using quantitative methods to explain the development of policing in 23 cities from 1860 to 1920.[2]

Overall these histories illustrate the way in which police have developed over time. They point out the origins of concepts like crime prevention, authority, professionalism and discretion. In addition, these historical analyses show the roots of problems in policing, such as corruption, brutality, and inefficiency.

The major emphasis of this chapter is to examine the development of the police since 900 A.D. and more specifically, to determine whether the role of the police has changed in American society over a period of about 300 years. This is not an easy task. The debate over the "true" or "proper" police function is an ongoing one and cannot itself

be resolved in a chapter such as this.[3] However, by describing the various roles, activities, and functions of law enforcement over time, we can at least acquire a glimpse of what the police do and how their activities have varied over time. To do so, we rely on a number of important contributions to the study of the history of police.

The chapter is divided into eight parts and basically covers the history of law enforcement and its effect on colonial America to the present. Part I examines the English heritage of law enforcement and its effect on colonial America. The colonists relied heavily on the mother country for their ideas regarding community involvement in law enforcement.

Part II examines the problems of urban centers in the 18th and 19th centuries and turns to the development of the full-time uniformed police in England and America. The preventive approach to law enforcement became central to the police role in both London and American cities. Part III is concerned with police activity in 19th century American cities. Patrol work and officer involvement in corruption are discussed.

In Part IV the reform movement of the Progressive Era is examined. From 1890 to 1920 reformers attempted to implement social, economic, and political change in the cities. As part of city government, police departments were targets of change as well.

In Part V we study a second reform era. From 1910 to 1960 chiefs became involved in a movement to professionalize the police. Part VI covers the riots and disorders of the 1960s and their immediate effect on policing across the country. Part VII discusses the long-term legacy of the 1960s. That is, we examine the developments of the

---

[2] This list of police histories is by no means, a comprehensive one. A vast number of journal articles, books and dissertations have been written since the 1960s.

police since 1969 in terms of research and public policy. Lastly, in Part VIII we describe a third reform movement in policing -- the development of community oriented policing of the 1980s and 1990s.

I. Communities, Constables, and Colonists

Like much of America's common-law tradition, the origins of modern policing can be linked directly to its English heritage. Ideas concerning community policing, crime prevention, the posse, constables, and sheriffs developed from English law enforcement. Beginning at about 900 A.D., the role of law enforcement was placed in the hands of the common, every day citizens. Each citizen was held responsible for aiding neighbors who might be victims of outlaws and thieves. Because no police officers existed, individuals used state-sanctioned force to maintain social control. Charles Reith, a noted English historian, refers to this model of law enforcement as "kin police" (Reith, 1956). Individuals were considered responsible for their "kin" (relatives) and followed the adage, "I am my brother's keeper." Slowly this model developed into a more formalized "communitarian," or community-based police system.

After the Norman Conquest of 1066, a community model was established, which was called frankpledge. The frankpledge police system required that every male above the age of twelve form a group with nine of his neighbors called a tything. Each tything was sworn to apprehend and deliver to court any of its members who committed a crime. Each person was pledged to help protect fellow citizens and, in turn, would be protected. This system was "obligatory" in nature, in that tythingmen were not paid salaries for their work, but were required by law to carry out certain duties (Klockars, 1985:21). Tythingmen

[3] A number of scholars have examined the "police function," particularly in the last 20 or so years. Among the most well-known are Wilson (1968), Skolnick (1966), Bittner (1971), and Goldstein (1977). Each of

were required to hold suspects in custody while they were awaiting trial and to make regular appearances in court to present information on wrong-doing by members of their own or other tythings. If any member of the tything failed to perform his required duties, all members of the group would be levied severe fines.

Ten tythings were grouped into a hundred, directed by a constable (appointed by the local nobleman) who, in effect, became the first policeman. That is, the constable was the first official with law enforcement responsibility greater than simply helping one's neighbor. Just as the tythings were grouped into hundreds, the hundreds were grouped into shires, which are similar to counties today. The supervisor of each shire was the shire reeve (or sheriff), who was appointed by the king.

Frankpledge began to disintegrate by the 13th century. Inadequate supervision by the king and his appointees led to its downfall. As frankpledge slowly declined, the parish constable system emerged to take its place. The Statute of Winchester of 1285 placed more authority in the hands of the constable for law enforcement. One man from each parish served a one-year term as constable on a rotating basis. Though not paid for his work, the constable was responsible for organizing a group of watchmen who would guard the gates of the town at night. These watchmen were also unpaid and selected from the parish population. If a serious disturbance took place, the parish constable had the authority to raise the "hue and cry." This call to arms meant that all males in the parish were to drop what they were doing and come to the aid of the constable.

In the mid-1300s the office of justice of the peace was created to assist the shire reeve in controlling his territory. The local constable and the shire reeve became

---

these authors prescribes to a different view of what the police should and should not do.

assistants to the justice of the peace and supervised the night watchmen, served warrants, and took prisoners into custody for appearance before justice of the peace courts.

The English system continued with relative success well into the 1700s. By the end of the 18th century, however, the growth of large cities, civil disorders and increased criminal activity led to changes in the system.

Law Enforcement in Colonial America

In Colonial America (17th and 18th centuries), policing followed the English systems. The sheriff, constable, and watch were easily adapted to the colonies. The county sheriff, appointed by the governor, became the most important law enforcement agent particularly when the colonies remained small and primarily rural. The sheriff's duties included apprehending criminals, serving subpoenae, appearing in court and collecting taxes. The sheriff was paid a fixed amount for each task he performed. Since sheriffs received higher fees based on the taxes they collected, apprehending criminals was not a primary concern. In fact, law enforcement was a low priority.

In the larger cities and towns, such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia constables and the night watch conducted a wide variety of tasks. The night watch reported fires, raised the hue and cry, maintained street lamps, arrested or detained suspicious persons, and walked the rounds. Constables engaged in similarly broad tasks--taking suspects to court, eliminating health hazards, bringing witnesses to court, and so on.

For the most part, the activities of the constables and the night watch were "reactive" in nature. That is, these men responded to criminal behavior only when requested by victims or witnesses (Monkkonen, 1981). Rather than preventing crime, discovering criminal behavior, or acting in a "proactive" fashion, these individuals relied

on others to define their work. Public health violations were the only types of activity that required the officers to exercise initiative.

II. Preventive Police: Cops and Bobbies

The development of a "new" police system has been carefully documented by a number of American and English historians. Sir Leon Radzinowicz (1948-1968), Charles Reith (1956) and T.A. Critchley (1967) are among the more notable English writers. Roger Lane (1967), James F. Richardson (1970), Wilbur R. Miller (1977), Samuel Walker (1977), and Eric Mokkonen (1981) represent a rather diverse group of American historians who describe and analyze a number of early police departments. Taken together these works present the key elements of the activities of the first English and American police systems that used the preventive model.

During the mid-to late-1700s the growth of industry in England and in Europe led to rapid development in the cities. London, in particular, expanded at an unprecedented rate. From 1750 to 1820 the population nearly doubled (Miller, 1977) and the urban economy became more complex and specialized. The Industrial Revolution led to an increase in the number of factories, tenements, vehicles, and marketplace. With industrial growth came a breakdown in social control, as crime, riots, disorder, and public health problems disrupted the city. Food riots, wage protests, poor sewage control, pickpockets, burglars, and vandals created difficulties for city dwellers. The upper and middle classes, concerned about these issues sought more protection and preventive measures. The constable-watch system of law enforcement could no longer deal successfully with the problems of the day and alternative solutions were devised.

Some of the alternatives included using the militia; calling out the "yeomanry" or calvary volunteers for assistance; swearing in more law-abiding citizens as constables; or employing the army to quell riot situations (Richardson, 1974:10). However, these were short-term solutions to a long-term problem.

Another proposal was to replace the constable-watch system with a stronger, more centralized police force. Henry and John Fielding (magistrates in the 1750s), Patrick Colquhoun (a magistrate from 1792 to 1818), and philosopher Jeremy Bentham and his followers advocated the creation of a police force whose principal object was the prevention of crime. A preventive police force would act as a deterrent to criminals and would be in the best interests of society. But the idea of a uniformed police officer was opposed by many citizens and politicians in England. An organized police too closely resembled a standing army, which gave government potentially despotic control over citizens and subjects. The proponents of a police force eventually won out, based primarily on the disorder and fear of crime experienced by London residents. After much debate in the early 1800s, the London Metropolitan Police Act was finally approved by Parliament in 1829 (see Crtichley, 1967 and Reith, 1956).

The London Metropolitan Police Act established a full-time, uniformed police force with the primary purpose of patrolling the city. Sir Robert Peel, Britain's Home Secretary, is credited with the formation of the police. Peel synthesized the ideas of the Fieldings, Colquhoun, and Bentham into law; convinced Parliament of the need for police; and guided the early development of the force.

Through Peel and his two police commissioners, Charles Rowan and Richard Mayne, the role of the London Police was formulated. Crime prevention was the primary

function, but to enforce the laws and to exert its authority the police had to first gain legitimacy in the eyes of the public. According to Wilbur R. Miller (1977) the legitimation of the London police was carefully orchestrated by Peel and his associates. These men recognized that in order to gain authority police officers had to act in a certain manner or the public would reject them. To gain acceptance in the eyes of the citizen, Peel and his associates selected men who were even-tempered and reserved; chose a uniform that was unassuming (navy blue rather than military red); insisted that officers be restrained and polite; meted out appropriate discipline; and did not allow officers to carry guns. Overall, the London police emphasized their legitimacy as based on institutional authority--that their power was grounded in the English Constitution and that their behavior was determined by rules of law. In essence, this meant that the power of the London "bobby" or "Peeler" was based on the institution of the government.

American cities and towns encountered problems similar to those in England. Cities grew at phenomenal rates; civil disorders swept the nation, crime was perceived to be increasing. New York, for example, sprouted from a population of 33,000 in 1790 to 150,000 in 1830. Foreign immigrants, particularly Irish and Germans, accounted for a large portion of the increase. Traveling to America in search of employment and better lifestyles, the immigrants competed with native-born Americans for skilled and unskilled positions. As a result, the American worker saw Irishmen and German as social and economic threats.

Other tensions existed in the city as well. The race question was an important one in the Northern cities as well as in the Southern plantation. In fact, historians have shown that hostility to blacks was just as high in the North as in the South (Litwack, 1961).

Those opposed to slavery (the abolitionists) were often met by violence when they attempted to speak out against it.

Between the 1830s and 1870s, numerous conflicts occurred because of ethnic and racial differences, economic failures, moral questions, and during elections of public officials. In New York, 1834 was designated the "Year of the Riots" because so many took place (Miller, 1977). The mayoral election and anti-abolitionist sentiment were the two main reasons for the disorders. Other cities faced similar problems. In Philadelphia, the Broad Street Riot of 1837 involved almost 15,000 residents. The incident occurred because native-born volunteer firemen returning from a fire could not get by an Irish funeral procession. In St. Louis, in 1850 a mob destroyed the brothels in the city in an attempt to enforce standards of public decency. To quell most of these disturbances, the local militia was called in to suppress the violence, as the constables and the night watch were ineffectual.

At the same time that the riots occurred, citizens perceived that crime was increasing. Homicides, robberies, and thefts were thought to be on the rise. In addition, vagrancy, prostitution, gambling, and other vices were more observable on the streets. These types of criminal activities and the general deterioration of the city led to a sense of a loss of social control. But in spite of the apparent immediacy of these problems, replacements for the constable-watch police system did not appear over night.

The political forces in the large industrial cities like New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and others precluded the immediate acceptance of a London-style police department. City councils, mayors, state legislatures, and governors debated and wrangled over a number of questions and could not come to an immediate agreement over the type

of police they wanted. In New York City, for example, while problems emerged in 1834, the movement to form a preventive police department began in 1841, was officially created in 1845, but officers did not begin wearing uniforms until 1853.

While the first American police departments modeled themselves after the London Metropolitan Police, they borrowed selectively rather than exactly. The most notable carryover was the adoption of the preventive patrol idea. A police presence would alter the behavior of individuals and would be available to maintain order in an efficient manner. Differences, however, between the London and American police abounded. Miller (1977), in his comparative study of New York and London police, shows the drastic differences between the two agencies.

The London Metropolitan Police was a highly centralized agency. An extension of the national government, the police department was purposely removed from the direct political influence of the people. Furthermore, as noted above, Sir Robert Peel recruited individuals who fit a certain mold. Peel insisted that a polite, aloof officer who was trained and disciplined according to strict guidelines would be best suited for the function of crime prevention. In addition, the bobbies were encouraged to look upon police work as a career in professional civil service.

Unlike the London police, American police systems followed the style of local and municipal governments. City governments, created in the era of the "common man" and democratic participation, were highly decentralized. Mayors were largely figureheads; real power lay in the wards and neighborhoods. City councilmen or aldermen ran the government and used political patronage freely. The police departments shared this style of participation and decentralization. The police were an extension of different political

factions, rather than an extension of city government. Police officers were recruited and selected by political leaders in a particular ward or precinct. As a result of the democratic nature of government, legal intervention by the police was limited, unlike the London police which relied on formal control or individual authority. That is, instead of drawing on institutional legitimacy (i.e., parliamentary laws), each police officer had to establish his own authority among the citizens he patrolled. The personal, informal police officer could win the respect of the citizenry by knowing local standards and expectations. This meant that different police behavior would occur in different neighborhoods. In New York, for example, the cop was free to act as he chose within the context of broad public expectations. He was less limited by institutional and legal restraints than was his London counterpart, entrusted with less formal power, but given broader personal discretion.

III. Police Activity in the 19th Century

American police systems began to appear almost overnight from 1860 to 1890 (Monkkonen, 1981). Once large cities like New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Cincinnati had adopted the English model, the new version of policing spread from larger to smaller cities rather quickly. Where New York had debated for almost ten years before formally adopting the London-style, Cleveland, Buffalo, Detroit, and other cities readily accepted the innovation. Monkkonen explains that the police were a part of a growing range of services provided by urban administrations. Sanitation, fire, and health services were also adopted during this period and the police were simply a part of their natural growth.

Across these departments, however, differences flourished. Police activity varied depending upon the local government and political factions in power. Standards for officer selection (if any), training procedures, rules and regulations, levels of enforcement of laws, and police-citizen relationships differed across the United States. At the same time, however, there were some striking similarities.

Patrol Officers. The 19th century patrolman was basically a political operative rather than a London-style professional committed to public service (Walker, 1977). Primarily selected for his political service, the police officer owed his allegiance to the ward boss and police captain that chose him.

Police officers were paid well but had poor job security. Police salaries compared favorably with other occupations. On average in 1880, most major cities paid policemen in the neighborhood of $900 a year. Walker (1977) reports that a skilled tradesman in the building industry earned about $770 a year, while those in manufacturing could expect about $450 a year. A major drawback, however, was that job security was poor, as their employment relied on election day events. In Cincinnati, for example, in 1880, 219 of the 295 members of the force were dismissed, while another 20 resigned because of political change in the municipal government. Other departments had similar turnover rates.

New officers were sent out on patrol with no training and few instructions beyond their rulebooks. Proper arrest procedures, rules of law, and so on were unknown to the officers. Left to themselves, they developed their own strategies for coping with life in the streets.

Police Work. Police officers walked a beat in all types of weather for two to six hours of a 12-hour day. The remaining time was spent at the station house on reserve.

During actual patrol duty, police officers were required to maintain order and make arrests, but they often circumvented their responsibilities. Supervision was extremely limited once an officer was beyond the station house. Sergeants and Captains had no way of contacting their men while they were on the beat, as communications technology was limited. Telegraph lines linked district stations to headquarters in the 1850s, but call boxes on the beat were not introduced until late in the 19th century and the radio and motorized communications did not appear until the 1900s (Lane, 1980). Police officers, then, acted alone and used their own initiative.

Unfortunately, little is known about ordinary patrol work or routine interactions with the public. However, historians have pieced together trends in police work based on arrest statistics. While these data have their limitations, they nonetheless provide a view of police activity.

Monkkonen's work (1981) found that from 1860 to 1920 arrests declined in 23 of the largest cities in the United States. In particular, crimes without victims (vice, disturbances, drunkenness, and other public order offenses) fell dramatically. Overall, Monkkonen estimated that arrests declined by more than 33% during the 60-year period. This trend runs contrary to "commonsense notions about the crime and growth of industrial cities, immigration and social conflict" (p. 75). Further analysis showed that the decline occurred because the police role shifted from one of controlling the "dangerous class" to one of controlling criminal behavior only. From 1860 to 1890, Monkkonen argues, the police were involved in assisting the poor, in taking in overnight lodgers and in returning lost children to their parents or orphanages. In the period of 1890 to 1920, however, the police changed their role, structure and behavior because of external

demands upon them. As a result, victimless arrests declined, while assaults, thefts, and homicide arrests increased slightly. Overall, however, the crime trend showed a decrease.

Police Corruption and Lawlessness. One of the major themes in the study of 19th century policing is the large-scale corruption that occurred in numerous departments across the country. The lawlessness of the police -- their systematic corruption and nonenforcement of the laws -- was one of the paramount issues in municipal politics during the late 1800s.

Police corruption was a part of a broader social and political problem. During this period, political machines ran municipal governments. That is, political parties (Democrats and Republicans) controlled the mayor's office, the city councils and local wards. Municipal agencies (fire departments, sanitation services, school districts, the courts, etc.) were also under the aegis of political parties. As part of this system, political patronage was rampant. Employment in exchange for votes or money was a common procedure. Police departments in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Kansas City, San Francisco, and Los Angles were filled with political appointees as police officers. To insure their employment, officers followed the norms of the political party, often protecting illicit activities conducted by party favorites.

Corrupt practices extended from the chief's office down to the patrol officer. In New York City, for example, Chief William Devery (1898-1901) protected gambling dens and illegal prize fighting because his friend, Tim Sullivan (a major political figure on the Lower East Side) had interests in those areas. Police captains like Alexander "Clubber" Williams and Timothy Creeden acquired extensive wealth from protecting prostitutes, saloonkeepers, and gamblers. Williams, a brutal officer (hence, the nickname Clubber),

was said to have a 53-foot yacht and residences in New York and the Connecticut suburbs. Since a captain's salary was about $3,000 a year in the 1890s, Williams had to collect from illegal enterprises in order to maintain his investments.

Because police officers worked alone or in small groups, there were ample opportunities to shake down peddlers and small businesses. Detectives allowed con men, pickpockets, and thieves to go about their business in return for a share of the proceeds. Captains often established regular payment schedules for houses of prostitution depending upon the number of girls in the house and the rates charged by them. The monthly total for police protection ranged between $25 and $75 per house plus $500 to open or re-open after being raided (Richardson, 1970).

Officers who did not go along with the nonenforcement of laws or did not approve of the graft and corruption of others found themselves transferred to less-than desirable areas. Promotions were also denied; they were reserved for the politically astute and wealthy officer (promotions could cost $10,000 to $15,000).

These types of problems were endemic to most urban police agencies throughout the country. They led to inefficiency and inequality of police services.

IV. Reform, Rejection, and Revision

A broad reform effort began to emerge toward the end of the 19th century. Stimulated mainly by a group known as the Progressives, attempts were made to create a truly professional police force. The Progressives were upper-middle class, educated Protestants who opposed the political machines, sought improvements in government, and

desired a change in American morality. By eliminating machine politics from government, all facets of social services, including the police, would improve.

These reformers found that the police were without discipline, strong leadership, and qualified personnel. To improve conditions, the progressives recommended three changes: 1) the departments should be centralized; 2) personnel should be upgraded; and 3) the police function should be narrowed (Fogelson, 1977). Centralization of the police meant that more power and authority should be placed in the hands of the chief. Autonomy from politicians was crucial to centralization. Upgrading the rank-and -file meant better training, discipline, and selection. Finally, the reformers urged that police give up all activities unrelated to crime. Police had run the ambulances, handled licensing of businesses, and sheltered the poor. By concentrating on fighting crime, the police would be removed from their service orientation and their ties to political parties would be severed.

From 1890 to 1920 the Progressive reformers struggled to implement their reform ideology in cities across the country. Some inroads were made during this period, including the establishment of police commissions, the use of civil service exams, and legislative reforms.

The immediate response to charges of corruption were to create police administrative boards. The reformers attempted to take law enforcement appointments out of the hands of mayors and city councilmen and place control in the hands of oversight committees. The Progressives believed that politics would be eliminated from policing by using this maneuver. In New York, for example, the Lexow Committee, which investigated the corrupt practices of the department, recommended the formation of a

bipartisan Board of Police Commissioners in 1895. Theodore Roosevelt became a member of this board, but to his dismay found that the commissioners were powerless to improve the state of policing. The bipartisan nature of the board (two Democrats and two Republicans) meant that consensus could not be reached on important issues. As a result, by 1900 the New York City police were again under the influence of party politics. In the following year the board of commissioners was abolished and the department was placed under the responsibility of a single commissioner (Walker, 1977). Other cities had similar experiences with the police commission approach. Cincinnati, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Baltimore were among those that adopted the commission, but found it to be short-lived. The major problem was still political -- the police were viewed as an instrument of the political machine at the neighborhood level and reformers could not counter the effects of the Democratic or Republican parties.

Civil service was one answer to upgrading personnel. Officers would be selected and promoted based on merit, as measured by a competitive exam. Moreover, the officer would be subject to review by his supervisors and removal from the force met with some resistance by officers and reformers alike. The problem was that in guarding against the effects of patronage and favoritism, civil service became a rigid, almost inflexible procedure. Because it measured abstract knowledge rather than the qualities required for day-to-day work, civil service procedure were viewed as problematic. Eventually, the program did help to eliminate the more blatant forms of political patronage in almost all of the large police departments (Walker, 1977).

During the 30-year period, the efforts of the Progressive reformers did not change urban departments drastically. The reform movement resulted, in part, in the elimination

of the widespread graft and corruption of the 1890s, but substantive changes in policing did not take place. Chiefs continued to lack power and authority, many officers had little or no education, training was limited, and the police role continued to include a wide variety of tasks.

Robert Fogelson (1977) suggests several reasons for the failure of reform. First, political machines were too difficult to break. Despite the efforts by the Progressives, politicians could still count on individual supporters to undermine the reforms. Second, police officers themselves resented the Progressives interventions. Reformers were viewed by the police as individuals who knew little about police work and officers saw their proposals for change as ill conceived. Finally, the reforms failed because the idea of policing could not be divorced from politics. That is, the character of the big-city police was interconnected with policymaking agencies that helped to decide which laws were enforced, which public was served, and whose peace was kept (Fogelson, 1977). Separating the police completely from politics could not take place.

V. The Emergence of Police Professionalism

A second reform effort emerged in the wake of the failure of the Progressives. Within police circles, a small cadre of chiefs sought and implemented a variety of innovations that would improve policing generally. From about 1910 to 1960 police chiefs carried on another reform movement, advocating that police adopt the professional model.

The professional department embodied a number of characteristics. First, the officers were experts; they applied knowledge to their tasks and were the only ones

qualified to do the job. Second, the department was autonomous from external influences, such as political parties. This also meant that the departments made its own rules and regulated its personnel. Finally, the department was administratively efficient, in that it carried out its mandate to enforce the law through modern technology and businesslike practices. These reforms were similar to those of the Progressives, but because they came from within the police organizations themselves, they met with more success.

Leadership and technology assisted the movement to professionalize the police. Chiefs like Richard Sylvester, August Vollmer and O.W. Wilson emphasized the use of innovative methods in police work. Samuel Walker (1977) notes that Sylvester, the chief of the Washington, D.C. police, helped to establish the idea of professionalism among police chiefs. As president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Sylvester inculcated the spirit of reform into the organization. He stressed the acceptance of technological innovations, raised the level of discussion among chiefs to include crime control ideas, and promoted professionalism generally.

The major innovator among the chiefs was August Vollmer, chief of the Berkeley, California police. Vollmer was known for his promising work in developing college-level police education program, bicycle and automobile patrol, and scientific crime detection aids. His department was the first to use forensic science in solving crimes.

Vollmer's emphasis on the quality of police personnel was tied closely to the idea of the professional officer. Becoming an expert in policing meant having the requisite credentials. Vollmer initiated intelligence, psychiatric and neurological tests by which to select applicants. He was the first police chief to actively recruit college students. In addition, he was instrumental in linking the police department with the University of

California at Berkeley. Another concern of Vollmer's dealt with the efficient delivery of police services. His department became the first in the nation to use automobiles and the first to hire a full-time forensic scientist to help solve crimes (Douthit, 1975).

O.W. Wilson, Vollmer's student, followed in his mentor's footsteps by advocating efficiency within the police bureaucracy through scientific techniques. As chief in Wichita, Kansas, Wilson conducted the first systematic study of one-officer squad cars. He argued that one-officer cars were efficient, effective, and economical. Despite arguments from patrol officers that their safety was at risk, Wilson claimed that the public received better service with single-officer cars.

Wilson's other contributions include his classic textbook, <u>Police Administration</u> which lays out specific ideas regarding the use of one-man patrol cars, deployment of personnel on the streets, disciplinary measures, and organizational structure. Later in his career, Wilson accepted a professorship at UC Berkeley where he taught and trained law enforcement officers. In 1947 he founded the first professional School of Criminology.

Other chiefs contributed to the professional movement as well. William Parker changed the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) from a corrupt, traditional agency to an innovative, professional organization. From 1950 to his death in 1966, Parker served as chief. He was known for his careful planning, emphasis on efficiency, and his rigorous personnel selection and training procedures. His public relations campaigns and adept political maneuvers enabled him to gain the respect of the media and the community. As a result, the LAPD became a model for reform across the country.

Technological changes also enabled the police to move toward professionalism. The patrol car, two-way radio, and telephone altered the way in which the police operated

and the manner in which citizens made use of the police. Motorized patrol meant more efficient coverage of the city and quicker response to calls for service. The two-way radio dramatically increased the supervisory capacity of the police. Continuous contact between sergeant and police officer could be maintained. Finally, the telephone provided the link between the public and the police. Though not a new invention, its use in conjunction with the car and two-way radio meant that the efficient response to calls for service would be realized.

Overall, the second reform movement met with more success than the Progressive attempt, though it did not achieve its goal of professionalization. Walker (1977) and Fogelson (1977) agree that the quality of police officers greatly improved during this period. Police departments turned away the ill-educated individual, but at the same time failed to draw college graduates to their ranks. In terms of autonomy, police reformers and others were able to reduce the influence of political parties in departmental affairs. Chiefs obtained more power and authority in their management abilities, but continued to receive input from political leaders. In fact, most chiefs remained political appointees. In terms of efficiency, the police moved forward in serving the public more quickly and competently. Technological innovations clearly assisted the police in this area, as did streamlining the organizations themselves. However, the innovations also created problems. Citizens came to expect more from the police -- faster response times, more arrests, and less overall crime. These expectations, as well as other difficulties, led to trying times for the police in the 1960s.

VI. Riots and Renewal

Policing in America encountered its most serious crisis in the 1960s. The rise in crime, the civil rights movement, anti-war sentiment, and riots in the cities brought the police into the center of a maelstrom.

During the decade of the 1960scrime increased at a phenomenal rate. Between 1960 and 1970 the crime rate per 100,000 persons doubled. Most troubling was the increase in violent crime -- the robbery rate almost tripled during these ten years. As crime increased, so too, did the demands for its reduction. The police, in emphasizing its crime fighting ability, had given the public a false expectation they had created. As a result, the public image of the police was tarnished.

The civil rights movement created additional demands for the police. The movement, begun in the 1950s, sought equality for black Americans in all facets of life. Sit-ins at segregated lunch counters, boycotts of bus services, attempts at integrating schools, and demonstrations in the streets led to direct confrontations with law enforcement officers. The police became the symbol of a society that denied blacks equal justice under the law.

Eventually, the frustrations of black Americans erupted into violence in Northern and Southern cities. Riots engulfed almost every major city between 1964 and 1968. Most of the disorders were initiated by a routine incident involving the police. The spark that initiated the riots occurred on July 16, 1964, when a white New York City police officer shot and killed a black teenager. Black leaders in the Harlem ghetto organized protests demanding disciplinary action against the officer. Two days later, the demonstrators marched on precinct headquarters, where rock-throwing began. Eventually,

looting and burning erupted during the night and lasted two full days. When the riot was brought under control one person was dead, more than 100 injured, almost 500 arrested, and millions of dollars worth of property destroyed. In the following year, the Watts riot in Los Angeles led to more devastation. Thirty-four persons died, a thousand were injured, and 4,000 arrested. By 1966, 43 more riots broke out across the country and in 1967 violence in Newark and Detroit exceeded the 1965 Watts riot. Disorders engulfed Newark for five days, leaving 23 dead, while the Detroit riot a week later lasted nearly seven days and resulted in 43 deaths with $40 million in property damages.

On the final day of the Detroit riot, President Lyndon Johnson appointed a special commission to investigate the problem of civil disorder. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (The Kerner Commission) identified institutional racism as the underlying cause of the rioting. Unemployment, discrimination in jobs and housing, inadequate social services, and unequal justice at the hands of the law were among the problems cited by the commission.

Police actions were also cited as contributing to the disorders. Direct police intervention had sparked the riots in Harlem, Watts, Newark, and Detroit. In Watts and Newark the riots were set off by routine traffic stops. In Detroit a police raid on an after-hours bar in the ghetto touched off the disorders there. The police thus, became the focus of the national attention.

The Kerner Commission and other investigations found several problems in police departments. First, police conduct included brutality, harassment, and abuse of power. Second, training and supervision was inadequate. Third, police-community relations were

poor. Fourth, the employment of the black officers lagged far behind the growth of the black population.

As a means of coping with these problems in policing (and other agencies of the criminal justice system) President Johnson created a crime commission and Congress authorized federal assistance to criminal justice. The President's crime commission produced a final report that emphasized the need for more research, higher qualifications of criminal justice personnel, and greater coordination of the national crime-control effort. The federal aid program to justice agencies resulted in the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance, a forerunner of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEEA).

VII. The Legacy of the 60's

The events of the 1960s forced the police, politicians, and policymakers to re-assess the state of law enforcement in the United States. For the first time, academics rushed to study the police in an effort to explain their problems and crises. With federal funding from LEAA and private organizations researchers began to study the police from a number of perspectives. Sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, and historians began to scrutinize different aspects of policing. Traditional methods of patrol development, officer selection, and training were questioned. Racial discrimination in employment practices, in arrests, and in the use of deadly force were among the issues closely examined.

In addition, the professional movement itself came into question. As Walker notes, the legacy of professionalization was "ambiguous" (Walker, 1977: 167). On one hand, the police made improvements in their level of service, training, recruitment, and

efficiency. On the other hand, a number of problems remained and a number of new ones emerged. Corruption scandals continued to present problems. In New York, Chicago, and Denver systematic corruption was discovered. Political parties persisted in their links to policing.

The professional movement had two unintended consequences. The first involved the development of a police subculture. The second was the problem of the police-community relations. In terms of the subculture, police officers began to feel alienated from administrators, the media and the public turned inward as a result. Patrol officers began to resent the police hierarchy because of the emphasis on following orders and regulations. While this established uniformity in performance and eliminated so abuses of power, it also stifled creativity and the talents of many officers. Rather than thinking for themselves (as professionals would) patrol officers followed orders given by sergeants, lieutenants, or other ranking officers. This led to morale problems and criticism of police administration by the rank and file.

Patrol officers saw the media and the public as foes because of the criticism and disrespect cast their way. As the crime rate increased, newspaper accounts criticized the police for their inability to curtail it. As the riots persisted, some citizens cried for more order, while others demanded less oppression by the police on the streets. The conflicting message given to the patrol officers by these groups led to distrust, alienation, and frustration. Only by standing together did officers feel comfortable in their working environment.

The second unintended consequence of professionalism was the problems it generated for police-community relations. Modern technology, like the patrol car,

removed the officer from the street and eliminated routine contact with citizens. The impersonal style of professionalism often exacerbated police-community problems. Tactics such as aggressive patrol in black neighborhoods, designed to suppress crime efficiently, created more racial tensions.

The problems called into question the need for and effectiveness of professionalism. Some police administrators suggested abandoning the movement. Others sought to continue the effort while adjusting for and solving the difficulties. For the most part, the goal of professionalization remains operative. In the 1970s and 1980s, progressive police chiefs and organizations pressed for innovations in policing. As a result, social science research became an important part of policymaking decisions. By linking research to issues like domestic violence, repeat offenders, use of deadly force, training techniques, and selection procedures, police executives increased their ability to make effective decisions.

VIII. From Reactive to Proactive: Community Policing Strategies

As a result of the problems of the 1960s and 1970s, a third wave of reform of police operations and strategies began to emerge -- community-oriented policing. Community policing came to light as an idea and philosophy in response to the communication gap between police and community and because of research studies that questioned police tactics and strategies. A new paradigm which incorporated the ‘broken windows’ theory, proactive policing, and problem-oriented policing shaped the community policing reform era.

Researchers began to question some of the basic premises of law enforcement. They found that randomly patrolling an area of a city does not deter crime (Kelling, et al, 1974). Other researchers found that detectives could not solve crime by simply gathering evidence from crime scenes -- they needed witnesses and other information to assist them (Greenwood, Chaiken and Petersilia, 1977). Researchers also found that rapid response to calls for service does not always result in the apprehension of offenders (Spelman and Brown, 1984).

Police strategists recognized that simply reacting to calls for service limits the ability of law enforcement to control crime and maintain order. Police on patrol cannot see enough to control crime effectively -- they do not know how to intervene to improve the quality of life in the community. The reactive strategy used during the professional era no longer was effective in dealing with complex problems in the 1980s and 1990s. Instead, Herman Goldstein (1979) and James Q. Wilson and George Kelling (1982) called for police to engage in proactive work and problem-oriented policing. A whole body of work from police researchers, strategists, and reformers laid the groundwork for the community policing movement.

Defining Community Policing

Community policing has a number of different definitions (Maguire, et al, 1997). For some, community policing means instituting foot patrols and bicycle patrols, getting out of patrol cars, and a host of other activities that are designed to bring police officers closer to the communities they serve. For others, it means order maintenance, cleaning up tattered neighborhoods, and fixing ‘broken windows’ (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). For many agencies, community policing is simply implementing a series of community-

relations programs, including Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), Neighborhood Watch, and a variety of others.

Most supporters of community policing view it as a new philosophy of policing. In its ideal sense, it means changing the traditional definition of policing from one of crime control to one of community problem-solving and empowerment (Goldstein, 1990; Wilson and Kelling, 1982). In addition to redefining the police mission, a practical shift to a community policing strategy means changing the "principal operating methods, and the key administrative arrangements of police departments" (Moore, 1992: 103). Three integral dimensions are consistently highlighted:

1. engaging and interacting with the community;
2. solving community problems; and
3. adapting internal elements of the organization to support these new strategies (Bayley, 1994; Community Policing Consortium, 1994).

In its ideal sense, community policing promises to fundamentally transform the way police do business. Reformers argue that police should not be so obsessed with routine "people-processing" activities (e.g., making arrests or filling out reports) but should focus instead on "people-changing" activities (Mastrofski and Ritti, 1995). These include building up neighborhoods, designing custom solutions to local problems, forging partnerships with other community agencies, and a variety of other non-routine police activities.

The Effects of Federal Funding

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Crime Act) gave a tremendous financial boost to the community policing movement. Under Title I, known

as the “Public Safety Partnership and Community Policing Act of 1994,” Congress and the Clinton Administration, determined that 100,000 additional officers, new technology, and innovative programs should be provided to law enforcement agencies throughout the nation with a particular emphasis on the implementation of community policing. Title I authorized the expenditure of $8.8 billion over six years for use in three primary approaches – hiring new officers for community policing, acquiring technology and hiring civilians to free up time for officers to engage in community policing, and implementing new programs. A new agency, called the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) was formed within the Department of Justice specifically to distribute grants and carry out the statutory mandates of Title I (see Roth et al, 2000, and Gest, 2001).

From 1995 to 2003, the COPS Office provided more than $6.9 billion to nearly 13,000 state and local law enforcement agencies to hire over 118,000 officers, deputies, and troopers. The COPS Office provided law enforcement agencies with an array of community policing training and technical assistance resources. In addition, new programs were developed and funded, including the use of problem solving partnerships in schools, community-based efforts to combat domestic violence, and advancing community policing through demonstration centers.

As a result of these funds, by 1999 over 60 percent of municipal police agencies had developed a strategic plan that incorporated community policing principles (Reaves and Hart, 2000). Almost all of the largest police agencies in the country had full-time community policing officers working the streets. According to data from BJS, in 1999 large law enforcement agencies had a total of about 59,000 full-time sworn personnel

serving as community policing officers. This was about five times as many as was reported in 1997.

In addition to the changes in strategic plans and the increase in officers on the street, independent evaluators found that the COPS Office programs accelerated the transition of community policing in three important ways. First, they stimulated a "national conversation about community policing and provided training and technical assistance to agencies." Second, hiring monies and innovative policing grants allowed chief executives to add community policing programs without cutting back other programs. Third, the funds created an incentive for agency executives to adopt community policing (Roth et al, 2000: 23).

Concluding Remarks

With the onset of a new millennium, American police agencies face new challenges. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon changed the way in which law enforcement collectively thinks about public safety and security. Priorities for training, equipment, strategies, and funding have transformed policing once again – this time focusing on homeland security. Time will tell us about the hows and whys of this transformation.

This chapter has examined the history of American police systems from the English heritage through the last years of the 20th century. Major emphasis has been placed on the police role, though important events that shaped the development of the police have also been discussed. As can be seen through this review, a number of present-day issues have their roots in different epochs of American history. For example, the idea

of community policing can be traced to the colonial period and to medieval England. Preventive patrol, legitimacy, authority, and professionalism are 18th and 19th century concepts. Riots, disorders, and corruption are not new to American policing, similar events occurred in the 19th century. Thus, by virtue of studying history, we can give contextual meaning to current police problems, ideas, and situations. By looking at the past, present-day events can be better understood.

REFERENCES

Alfers, Kenneth G. 1975. "The Washington Police: A History, 1800-1866," Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University.

Bittner, Egon. 1970. The Functions of the Police in Modern Society. Chevy Chase, MD: National Institute of Mental Health.

Cei, Louis B. 1975. "Law Enforement in Richmond: A History of Police Community Relations, 1737-1974," Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University.

Critchley, T.A. 1967. A History of Police in England and Wales. Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith.

Douthit, Nathan. 1975. "August Vollmer: Berkeley's First Chief of Police and the Emergence of Police Professionalism," California Historical Quarterly 54 Spring: 101-124.

Fogelson, Robert. 1977. Big-City Police. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gest, Ted. 2000. Crime and Politics: Big Government's Erratic Campaign for Law and Order. New York: Oxford University Press.

Goldstein, Herman. 1977. Policing a Free Society. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Press.

_____. 1979. "Improving Policing: A Problem-Oriented Approach." Crime and Delinquency 25:236-58.

_____. 1990. Problem-Oriented Policing. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Klockars, Carl. 1985. The Idea of Police. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Lane, Roger. 1967. Policing the City: Boston, 1822-1285. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

______. 1980. "Urban Police and Crime in the Nineteenth-Century America," in Michael Tonry and Norval Morris, eds., Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Volume 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Litwack, Leon. 1961. North of Slavery. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maguire, Edward R., Joseph B. Kuhns, Craig D. Uchida, and Stephen M. Cox. 1997. "Patterns of Community Policing in Nonurban America," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 34 No. 3, August: 368-394.

Maniha, John K. 1970. "The Mobility of Elites in a Bureaucratizing Organization: The

St. Louis Police Department, 1861-1961," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan.

Miller, Wilbur R. 1977. Cops and Bobbies: Police Authority in New York and London, 1830-1870. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Monkkonen, Eric H. 1981. Police in Urban America, 1860-1920. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Radzinowicz, Leon. 1948-1968. History of the English Criminal Law, Volume 1-4. New York: MacMillan.

Reichard, Maximillian I. 1975. "The Origins of Urban Police: Freedom and Order in Antebellum St. Louis," Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University.

Reith, Charles. 1956. A New Study of Police History. Edinburgh.

Richardson, James F. 1970. The New York Police: Colonial Times to 1901. New York: Oxford University Press.

______. 1974. Urban Police in the United States. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press.

Rider, Eugene F. 1971. "The Denver Police Department: An Administrative, Organizational, and Operational History, 1858-1905," Ph.D. dissertation. University of Denver.

Roth, Jeffrey, A., Joseph F. Ryan, Stephen J. Gaffigan, Christopher S. Koper, Mark H. Moore, Janice A. Roehl, Calvin C. Johnson, Gretchen E. Moore, Ruth M. White, Michael E. Buerger, Elizabeth A. Langston, and David Thacher. 2000. National Evaluation of the COPS Program – Title I of the 1994 Crime Act. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

Schneider, John C. 1980. Detroit and the Problems of Order, 1830-1880. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Skolnick, Jerome. 1966. Justice Without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Walker, Samuel. 1977. A Critical History of Police Reform: The Emergence of Professionalism. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company.

Wilson, James Q. 1968. Varieties of Police Behavior: The Management of Law and Order in Eight Communities. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wilson, James Q. and George Kelling. 1982. “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety.” Atlantic Monthly 249: 29-38.